

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /084 W
-----070401 062107Z /66

R 061622Z DEC 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5326
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
USMISSION GENEVA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 17634

USSALTTWO ALSO FOR MISSION

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PARM, UR, US
SUBJECT: ARMS TRANSFERS: SOVIETS PROTEST BURT ARTICLE AND STATE
"CONFIRMATION" OF IT

SUMMARY: MFA DEC. 2 MADE AN "ORAL STATEMENT" PROTESTING THE LEAK OF INFORMATION AND THE OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN NEW YORK TIMES RICHARD BURT ARTICLE ON NOV. 25. THEY ALSO PROTESTED THE "CONFIRMATION" OF THE ARTICLE BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN, SAYING THAT THE ARTICLE AND ITS "CONFIRMATION" COULD NOT HELP THE TALKS. EMBOFF REPLIED THAT USG DOES NOT SANCTION LEAKS, DOES NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OPINIONS IN THE U.S. PRESS AND DID NOT "CONFIRM" BURT ARTICLE, BUT ONLY THE FACT THAT PLANS ARE UNDERWAY FOR ARMS TRANSFERS TALKS TO BEGIN. END SUMMARY.

1. ON NOV. 30 THE ACTING CHIEF OF MFA'S USA DIVISION, V.G. KOMPLEKTOV, TOLD THE AMBASSADOR
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INFORMALLY AT AN AIRPORT MEETING THAT MFA WAS UPSET ABOUT AN ARTICLE BASED ON "LEAKED" INFORMATION ON THE ARMS TRANSFER TALKS WHICH WAS CARRIED IN THE EMBASSY DAILY NEWS BULLETIN. THE AMBASSADOR EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT AT PRECISELY WHAT MFA WAS CONCERNED ABOUT, THE "LEAK", THE ARTICLE, OR THE BULLETIN'S REPORT OF IT.

2. ON DEC. 2 EMBOFF WAS CALLED IN BY USA DIVISION FIRST SECRETARIES V.I. KUZNETSOV AND P.D. PAVLOV WHO FORMALLY PROTESTED BOTH THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE BY RICHARD BURT, DATED NOV. 25 AND CARRIED IN THE WIRELESS FILE NOV. 25. THEY ALSO PROTESTED THE "CONFIRMATION" OF THE ARTICLE BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN (CARRIED IN THE NOV. 26 WIRELESS FILE AND REPEATED IN THE EMBASSY BULLETIN ON NOV. 28.: "RESTON CONFIRMED A STORY IN THE NEW YORK TIMES ANNOUNCING PLANS FOR DISCUSSIONS BEGINNING IN MID-DECEMBER BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION ON LIMITING CONVENTIONAL ARMS SALES TO THE THIRD WORLD. HE SAID THE MEETINGS WERE THE RESULT OF "CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SOVIETS ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS DATING FROM THE SECRETARY'S VISIT IN MARCH.")

3. FOLLOWING IS VIRTUAL VERBATIM TEXT OF ORAL STATEMENT (A COPY OF WHICH WAS NOT SHOWN TO EMBOFF): BEGIN TEXT: THE MINISTRY HAS TAKEN NOTE OF THE RECENT ARTICLE OF R. BURT IN THE NEW YORK TIMES WHICH CONTAINS INFORMATION ON THE FORTHCOMING "OFFICIAL" SOVIET-AMERICAN NEGOTIATIONS IN WASHINGTON IN MID-DECEMBER ON LIMITING INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS. THE MINISTRY NOTES AS WELL THE CONFIRMATION OF THIS CONFIDENTIAL

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ARTICLE BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT AS REPORTED IN THE EMBASSY BULLETIN. AS FAR AS ONE CAN DETERMINE FROM THE ARTICLE IT WAS PREPARED ON THE BASIS OF INFORMATION WHICH COULD ONLY HAVE COME FROM WELL-INFORMED SOURCES. ADDITIONALLY ONE CANNOT FAIL TO NOTE THE TENDENTIOUS INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATIONS IN THIS ARTICLE.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 17634

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4. SUCH ONE-SIDED INTERPRETATIONS BY THE AMERICAN PRESS OF THE FACT AND THE NATURE OF THE FORTHCOMING PRELIMINARY TALKS OF THE SOVIET AND U.S. REPRESENTATIVES ON THE QUESTION OF LIMITING THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRADE CAN IN NO WAY CONTRIBUTE TO A NORMAL DIALOGUE ON THIS PROBLEM. END TEXT.

5. EMBOFF MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS TO KUZNETSOV AND PAVLOV, STRESSING THAT OBVIOUSLY HE WAS SPEAKING PERSONALLY AND WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS.

-- THE USG DOES NOT SANCTION ANY UNAUTHORIZED RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION WHICH MAY AT TIMES OCCUR. HOWEVER, EMBOFF SAID, HE WAS NOT FAMILIAR WITH THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BURT ARTICLE OR WITH HOW BURT OBTAINED HIS INFORMATION.

-- THE USG COULD NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMENTS AND VIEWS WHICH BURT EXPRESSED IN HIS ARTICLE. IN THE U.S. THE PRESS IS FREE TO PRINT ANY OPINIONS AND VIEWS IT WISHES.

-- IT IS INCORRECT TO ASSUME, AS THE SOVIET STATEMENT DOES, THAT THE COMMENT BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS SPOKESMAN CONSTITUTED "CONFIRMATION" OF THE ARTICLE IN ITS ENTIRETY OR OF ANY OF THE OPINIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THE BURT PIECE. IT CONSTITUTED ONLY CONFIRMATION OF THE PLANS FOR THE TALKS TO BEGIN IN MID-DECEMBER, NOTHING MORE.

6. KUZNETSOV RESPONDED THAT THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN SHOULD HAVE TAKEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO

REFUTE THE CONTENTS OF THE STORY AND NOT GIVE
"CONFIRMATION" OF IT. EMBOFF REPEATED HIS POINT ABOUT
WHAT WAS BEING CONFIRMED AND SAID THAT IT WAS NOT THE
PRACTICE OF THE SPOKESMAN TO REFUTE OPINIONS AND VIEWS.
IN CLOSING KUZNETSOV SAID HE HOPED THAT THE STATEMENT
OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WOULD UNDERLINE THE CON-
CERN WHICH IT ATTACHES TO THIS "LEAK" WHICH HE SAID
WAS ONE OF A SERIES OF RECENT LEAKS IN THE ARMS
CONTROL AREA, OTHER SERIOUS ONES BEING IN THE AREA OF SALT.
THERE WAS, HE SAID POINTEDLY, AN AGREEMENT
ABOUT HAVING AGREED PRESS RELEASES CONCERNING THESE
ARMS TRANSFERS TALKS. EMBOFF PROMISED TO CONVEY THE
MFA STATEMENT TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES IN
WASHINGTON.

7. COMMENT: THIS EPISODE INDICATES THAT THE SOVIETS TAKE SERIOUSLY
THE AGREEMENTS ON THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF PLANS TO MEET TO DISCUSS
THESE ARMS CONTROL TOPICS AND THAT THEY DO NOT LIKE
TO SEE 5HE DATES REVEALED IN ADVANCE OF THE AGREED RELEASE. WE
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MADE NO PROMISE TO REPLY FURTHER TO THE SOVIET DEMARCHE AND WE DO
NOT PLAN TO UNLESS DEPARTMENT WISHES IT.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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TAGS: PARM, UR, US, STATE
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